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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a model of faculty staff development for distance education that does not require, or permit, continuous change in instructional design. The model is based on the paradigm shift ideas of Thomas Kuhn and the reeducation model of Kurt Lewin. In the model offered reeducation implies not simply education or training, but involves changing basic human behavior patterns and thus changing the values (core beliefs) and valences (connections and relationships) that make people behave the way they do. Lewin's based his concept of change on eight principles and believed that reeducation requires both "unfreezing" so that the culture can change and "refreezing" within a new culture; the trainer's role is seen as balancing the threat from change with a zone of safety. Faculty trainers for distance education are urged to: (1) understand the role of theory and stereotype; (2) keep needs assessment safe; (3)remember the differences between skills training and reeducation; (4) establish teams of learners for mutual support and to diminish individual threat; (5) earn and preserve trust; and (6) be clear about unfreezing and refreezing. (DB)

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Web instruction as cultural transformation: A reëducation model for faculty development

Frank Fuller

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Web instruction as cultural transformation: A reëducation model for faculty development

Frank Fuller

Technology implies change, in the popular mind at least as much as in the planning of the technologist. For the past four or five years, one of the foci of such change within the University has been the issue of distance education:

- Do we teach college over the World Wide Web?
- How do we teach college over the World Wide Web?
- Who's cheating on our tests over the World Wide Web?
- What's fair compensation for teaching over the World Wide Web?
- ... and, for many: Must I teach over the World Wide Web?

For the past four years with colleagues here and in other places I have been developing and testing models to assist instructors, both in industry and post-secondary settings, to adopt strategies for continuous change as intrinsic to their training and teaching. We encourage developmental strategies that permit instructors to build gradually on a foundation of experience. Strategies for continuous change permit one to move smoothly from a chalkboard to Compel for visual aids; from Compel to Mosaic to distribute presentations to a wider audience; from lecture to collaboration for instructional activity.

In truth, we haven't talked about either Compel (a trade name for a presentation program) or Mosaic (a trade name for a Web browser) for quite a while. Both have been gobbled up by larger companies, so trade names that were as common as Kleenex or Zippo just a few years ago are today dimly-remembered, at best.

That is the point of continuous change. The assumption is that one should not change *to* another point of view so much as it is that one should

prepare to change points of view constantly. The instructor whose teaching activities are under constant review will grow as fashion and technology permit.

My purpose today is to examine an alternative to strategies of continuous change in instructional to prepare for distance education. It seems to me time to consider alternate views of change that can have an effect on the kinds of choices that instructors make, and to consider a theoretical framework for staff development that does not require — or permit — continuous change in instructional design.

I should mention that my academic discipline is adult education. My purpose here is to theorize about staff development in advance of empirical testing, to outline a model that can be developed and tested empirically, rather than to report the results of such tests or to make specific assertions about college teaching within any particular discipline, my own included.

It seems almost self-contradictory to say that continuous change is old fashioned. Perhaps it would be better to say that assuming continuous change requires continuing, almost ironic belief in the importance of tradition and the past. Daniel Bell, in his famous "Coda: An agenda for the future" in *The Coming of the Post-Industrialist Society* (1973) described the process of change as systemic, a worldview of competing systems and evolving relationships of power and influence. Social change, for Bell, is an extension of scientific change. "[O]ne can say that the scientific estate — its ethos and its organization — is the monad that contains within itself the imago of the future society (p. 378)."

Distance education depends on technology. That dependence virtually insures that college teaching of this sort, an essentially social act, will be formed out of the ethos and organization permitted by the technology that supports it.

The role of technology in distance instruction has little to do with the subject matter of the instruction, of course. Physics as a scholarly discipline, for example, is rife with technology. Physicists rely on the laboratory, the

demonstration, and a mathematical frame of discourse as part of their instructional environment. Nonetheless, the role of technology in the scholarship of physics makes the discipline neither more susceptible – nor less so – to being changed by instructional technologies than musicology or history would be.

Accepting the power of technology to form instructional strategy requires a new relationship between the instructor and instruction. Though the subject matter changes from semester to semester – sometimes almost from minute to minute – the instructional environment within which we transmit that information stays largely the same. I am here, talking; students are there, listening. Libraries, laboratories, or field experiences supplement classrooms. The college teacher, as both scholar and transmitter of a portion of his or her discipline, synthesizes the discipline in a way that is suited to the familiar environment within the college.

For every teacher, decisions concerning how to teach have been socially constructed out of an amalgam of the discipline, the culture of the campus, and the limitations of university budget and mission. In distance delivery, technology takes a role in basic instructional decision-making that it has never been permitted in face-to-face instruction. The monad of technology contains within itself the imago of the instructional society.

The kind of change I have described is not continuous. The continuing changes that have made communications technology dazzling over these past decades mask the monumental, unique change that a commitment to distance education requires. Distance education requires one to be willing to permit the technology to mold decisions about communication, instruction, and nurturing. It requires the instructor to recognize that the media of instruction will develop and change, perhaps with each class, and that the instructional design of every class, thus offered, will become different with each passing semester. Distance education changes the experience of teaching and the

relationship between instructor and student. It requires one to reexamine the rules that describe good instruction and the system to which those rules apply.

Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolution* (1962) defines rules and paradigms. Though related, paradigms are not rules. A paradigm is an achievement that is "sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of ... activity. Simultaneously, it is sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve" (p. 10).

The paradigm — the new model and its new disciples — generates rules. The rules can be as transient as classroom conventions or as enduring as a commitment to continuing discovery. They share the qualities of arising from the paradigm and being systematic within its limits. They do not, however, depend on the existence of a paradigm to exist: rules can out-last any paradigm and persist from one paradigm to the next. Hence, rules for behavior persist from paradigm to paradigm.

> Since new paradigms are born from old ones, they ordinarily incorporate much of the vocabulary and apparatus ... that the traditional paradigm had previously employed. But the seldom employ these borrowed elements in quite the traditional way. Within the new paradigm, old terms, concepts, and experiments fall into new relationships with one another. The inevitable result is what we much call ... a misunderstanding between the two competing schools.... It is why, before they can hope to communicate fully, one group or the other must experience the conversion [called] a paradigm shift. Just because it is a transition between incommensurables, the transition between competing paradigms cannot be made a step at a time, forced by logic and neutral experience.... [I]t must occur all at once (though not necessarily in an instant) or not at all (p. 148, ff.).

Kuhn's view of change requires the participant to examine the rules that have made up their worldview. Rules continue, but they do not necessarily work within the new paradigm the way they did within the old. Process plays a

slight part in this view of change. The concepts change suddenly; the dialectical process occurs afterwards as a sort of mopping up activity.

The commitment to distance education, as a new paradigm of instruction, requires a commitment to understanding the rules of instruction differently within the new dispensation. It requires significant commitment on the part of the faculty and institution, and implies a willingness to reveal much – perhaps to risk much – on the part of the faculty members participating in the project.

For the adult educator, such risk and revelation can occur within an educative environment designed to foster change, almost to the exclusion of everything else.

One fosters change by strategies of three sorts: Empirical-rational, normative-reeducative, and power. One can change a group by arguing rationally about the benefit of the change, by encouraging the group to develop a new set of norms, or by simply ordering or forcing people to do things differently. Each carries assumptions about human motivation to change, and each assumption provides mechanisms for effective change.

Strategy	Empirical-rational	Normative-reeducative	Power
Assumption	People follow their rational self-interest, once it is revealed	People will follow their social norms and commitments	The less powerful will comply with the will of the more powerful
Change mechanism	People will adopt change if explained in rational terms	Change norms in favor of new attitudes, values, etc.	A visible expression of power (authority, law, or coercion)

Figure 1: Three strategies for change (adapted from Chin, R. & Benne, K., 1976).

The strategies of instructional change for distance education that we have followed thus far lie largely within the first and third categories. Individuals develop, often without institutional support, methods of instruction that take advantage of new technologies, or instructors are required to adapt, often reluctantly, their instruction to media the institution has made available.

I should like to concentrate on the middle ground. Rather than supporting the innovators or leading the resistors to reorder the way they conceptualize and deliver their instruction, I'd like to recommend a reēducation model of Kurt Lewin.

Lewin, a disciple and student of Ernst Cassirer, lost his parents in the death camps and fled his homeland before the War. Rigorous training as a philosopher of science combined with a frightful personal history to produce a procedural martinet with the broadest possible tolerance for individual difference. Lewin understood both rigor and tolerance as few others. He described change strategies that included participatory educational processes and normative — value-based — as well as cognitive or perceptual ends. A firm believer in the scientific method for all of life's investigations, Lewin nonetheless insisted on change management teams made up of academics, administrators, and activists: no single opinion would work alone. He believed completely that people do not change if only the need to change is explained to

them adequately, nor if the condign consequences of not changing are made apparent. "It's a perfectly good idea, if only you weren't to dam' fool to see" won't work as a change strategy. Effective strategies need to address the cultures, values, and beliefs of the organization in which change will be implemented.

Reëducation, in Lewin's vocabulary, implies not simply education or training. Reëducation means changing basic human behavior patterns and, in that change, changing the *values* (core beliefs) and *valences* (connections and relationships) that make people behave the way they previously did. He based his changes on eight principles. Here are the principles:[1]

Principle Number One: The process governing the acquisition of the normal and abnormal are fundamentally alike. Effective change strategies include awareness of the field of current practice as well as knowledge about the field to which change is desired. No effective argument can be made that begins with distance education as superior – or inferior – to the classroom, *ipso facto.*

Principle Number Two: The reëducative process has to fulfil a task that is essentially equivalent to a change in culture. Who is responsible? Our traditional view of education tends to assume that the client will change to become accommodated to a culture unaffected by the process of his or her education. Leaving the classroom means changing the culture to one that valued other kinds of instruction. Adapting to a new paradigm changes not only the learner, but the culture.

Principle Number Three: Experience alone does not create knowledge. True reëucative experiences need to include a spirit of experimental inquiry in which the learner becomes involved in the discovery process instead of simply receiving or applying information. The new instructional culture will invent

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[1] I am indebted, for this statement of Lewin's ten principles, to Kenneth Benne (1971) "The process of reëucation: An assessment of Kurt Lewin's views."

itself, not merely receive instructional modification from specialists or technicians.

Principle Number Four: Social action, just like physical action, is steered by perception. The perception of the relationship between the individual and the environment must change before action will change. A distrust of the technological environment will not permit changed behavior, regardless of a change of knowledge or belief alone.

Principle Number Five: The possession of correct knowledge does not suffice to rectify false perceptions. One forms a world view through the process of justifying one self to the world and to one's self. An instructor who distrusts the institution's support in the current environment will not be changed by information alone. Only a deeply held conviction of a loving, supportive environment will allow a person to let go of this need. That conviction alone allows cognition, rather than perception, to take control.

Principle Number Six: Incorrect stereotypes are functionally equivalent to wrong concepts. Prejudice is the functional equivalent of bad theory. Within the generalized belief set that generates our actions, our perception of the world and other actors within it rules our behavior. A prejudice will limit rational thinking just as surely as a bad theory will, and people will often change or ignore good theory in order to accommodate their prejudicial beliefs.

Principle Number Seven: Changes in sentiments do not necessarily follow changes in cognitive structure. Change in the official value system is necessary, but it isn't sufficient. Since cognition and perception are independent, change on one doesn't necessarily mean a change in the other. Individual feelings, which Lewin calls "action ideology," do not follow changes in the system. The college professor within the classroom employs an action ideology equaled in few other professions. Learning about new forms of instruction is not sufficient to change that ideology. Indeed, a large disparity between action ideology and the cognitive structure can produce guilt feelings, which in turn increase self-

justification in the individual that makes establishing the climate for change harder to achieve.

Principle Number Eight: True change involves three expressions of a central process: change in action ideology, acceptance of a changed set of facts and values, and a change in the perceived social world. Earning membership in a community and developing an individual value system are inextricable; indeed, they are the same. Change processes in instructional strategy must employ strategies addressing all three expressions.

Principle Number Nine: Acceptance of a new set of values and beliefs cannot usually be brought about item by item. Meaningful change comes from working with the entire personality in a way that maintains the integrity of the personality as it moves through the process of reëducation. Continuous change models have a value in accommodating to continuous changes in technology, and refresher courses, skills training, or expressions of appreciation can be incorporated into training piecemeal. Reëducation cannot.

Principle Number Ten: The individual accepts a new system of values and beliefs by accepting belongingness in a group. Acceptance of a new system is linked with acceptance of a specific group, a role within the group, and a definite source of authority as new points of reference. A nurturing, trusted, and knowledgeable institution is necessary for reëducation; neither technology nor rewards structure will suffice. Conduct will be changed by reëducation only when a new system of values and beliefs dominates the individual's perception.

People function "frozen" in cultural settings; their judgments are based on core values and valences, or connections (attractions or aversions) with others. A training design based on this reëducation strategy will have features that set it apart from continuous or skill-building designs. Education – new information – does not, alone, produce a change in this culture, for every force to change will be met, within a culture, by a resisting force that maintains equilibrium while increasing stress.

Committing to distance education engenders a kind of "learning anxiety" that suggests that significant learning will necessitate a loss of role within the old culture: the threat learning poses to well being isn't just a threat of failure. For change to occur, some of the sanctions and rewards of the culture must be suspended.

Reeducation involves "unfreezing" so that the culture can change; "refreezing" within a new culture. Consequently, the most important quality of a reeducation environment in which unfreezing/ change/refreezing can occur is trust. Unless a sufficiently safe environment is created, true reeducation will not occur. The threat from change is implicit in the task; the role of the trainer is to balance that threat with a zone of safety.

Understand the role of theory and stereotype. Distance education requires a new conception of the classroom, the laboratory, and the scope of responsibility the instructor exercises over students who have become distant in spirit as well as in body. Instructional theory alone will not overcome a distrust of this new relationship. The new theory will be seen, simply, as incorrect to the extent that it violates stereotypes of proper classroom relationships.

Keep needs assessment safe. A reeducative environment does not require a complete revelation of training need, and the act of questioning increases anxiety.

Remember the differences between skills training and reeducation. Skills training is best accomplished in small units – collections of tasks or procedures – and within the context of a community. Mastering technology is the proper material for continuing education. Reeducation cannot be accomplished piecemeal and involves a change of community Adopting new instructional principles should come first, and must come all at once.

Establish teams of learners for mutual support and to diminish individual threat. Remember Kuhn's assertion (1972, p. 176) that a "paradigm is what the

members of a scientific community share, *and*, conversely, a scientific community consists of men who share a paradigm" [original emphasis]. Especially in dealing with computing technology, be particularly aware of the semantic role of jargon. The fearsome language of computing is sometimes necessary for skills, but it can also become a shibboleth: the language of the new community

Earn and preserve trust. Create a safety zone and allows risk and minimizes "survivor guilt." Colleagues must trust the new culture, not only for themselves but for each other.

Be clear about unfreezing and refreezing. Once the new culture is in place, allow its members to establish themselves within it. Once valences have changed, allow them to become established. Use the time after refreezing for skills training, proper language use, etc.

Distance education requires a thoroughgoing change in the classroom and the campus. In some ways, the computers are the least of the revolution. The fundamental relationship among the professor, the learner, and the institutions of higher education are all on the line today. New models of classroom instruction are everywhere. It's time to test new ways that scholars can prepare themselves — to prepare each other and their institutions — to thrive in the new world.

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